(a) whether Government has conducted any survey on impacts of climate change and vulnerability assessment in key sectors such as agriculture, water and health in hilly States particularly in Himachal Pradesh;

(b) if so, the results thereof;

(c) whether the challenges posed by climate change have caused serious threat to ecological sustainability; and

(d) if so, the steps taken/being taken by Government to combat the impact of climate change?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) No survey has been conducted on impact of climate change and vulnerability assessment in key sectors in hilly States including Himachal Pradesh.

(c) and (d) Government is aware of the threat of climate change to ecological sustainability. Prime Minister has released National Action plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) on 30th June 2008 to outline India's strategy to meet the challenge of Climate Change. India's National Action Plan outlines a national strategy that aims to enable the country to adapt to climate change and enhance the ecological sustainability of India's development path.

Study on Himalayan glaciers

1859. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recently released Government sponsored study on Himalayan glaciers points out that it is premature to suggest that glaciers in the Himalayan region are retreating abnormally due to global warming;

(b) whether UN-constituted Inter Government Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its report, suggests that the glaciers including those in the Himalayan region are fast disappearing and would vanish by 2035 due to global warming and resultant climate change; and

(c) if so, Government's comments thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) The Studies carried out by Geological Survey of India have revealed that the majority of Himalayan glaciers are passing through a phase of recession, which is a worldwide phenomenon. The recession of glaciers is a part of the natural cyclic process of changes in size and other attributes of the glaciers. These changes could be attributed to various reasons including global warming.

(b) The Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change in its Fourth Assessment Report published in 2007 has indicated rapid melting of Himalayan Glaciers based on assessment of the results of certain modeling studies published in international literature.

(c) Long-term studies are required in order to conclusively establish the impact of global warming on recession of glaciers in Himalayan region.

Forest diversion proposals

1860. SHRI PYARIMOHAN MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the list of forest diversion proposals received from the Government of Orissa over the last 10 years and the specific purpose for which such forest lands were sought to be diverted;

(b) the cases which are pending, the reasons therefor in each case and by when those are likely to be cleared; and

(c) the cases rejected so far along with the reasons in each case?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) The information is being collected. On its receipt and compilation, the same will be laid on the table of the house.

Iron-ore mines in Goa

1861. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of iron-ore mines operating in Goa;

(b) the nature of permission granted to them for the purpose of mining;

(c) the number of mines in the State which have been issued notices under the Forest Conservation Act and other laws;

(d) the number of mines with respect to which licenses/permissions have been cancelled/revoked recently;

(e) the number of mines out of the above which have been allowed to operate by revoking the orders of cancellation;

(f) the objections, of the environmentalists against the mining activity in the State;

(g) the number of persons directly or indirectly employed in the mining industry; and

(h) the details of the present status of mining activity in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) The mining activity can only be undertaken after obtaining environmental clearance under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. The Ministry has, so far, granted environmental clearance to 111 iron-ore projects in Goa during the period from September 2006 to 30th November 2009.